

SPC Chad D. Wilkerson



◀ BROTHERS REUNITED IN BAGHDAD

Baghdad, Iraq

SEVEN months had passed since SPC Jason Lind had seen his brother, PFC Eric Lind. Both Soldiers left for Southwest Asia in January and both went into Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, but neither knew where the other was.

But thanks to Eric's keen eyesight, the brothers were finally reunited.

"I was on a routine trip to Baghdad International Airport and saw a vehicle with Jason's unit's designator," said Eric, who's an infantryman with the 1st Armored Division's Company A, 2nd Battalion, 6th Infantry Regiment. "I told my first sergeant, who then coordinated the meeting."

Meanwhile, Jason, an Army Reservist with the Oregon-based 671st Engineer Co., was also keeping a watchful eye out for his brother.

"The chances of running into a specific person among thousands of Soldiers spread across Iraq is small, but fate worked in our favor," Jason said.

The brothers said they were excited when they saw each other and felt proud they were both supporting their country.

"The Army creates an environment of camaraderie," said Eric. "Although I missed my brother, the Soldiers in my unit filled the relationship gap."

— SPC Chad D. Wilkerson,
372nd MPAD

OPERATION LONE STAR AIDS COMMUNITIES

Edinburg, Texas

Leroy Hernandez and thousands of other residents of communities in Texas' Rio Grande Valley, filled several school hallways to see military doctors and dentists during Operation Lone Star 2003.

The two-week mission — provided by the Texas Army National Guard, the Navy Reserve and civilian health organizations — provided medical and dental care to people who can't afford such care, said Linda C. Michels, coordinator for Health Education for Rural Outreach.

She said medical teams provided dental care, conducted sports physicals, gave immunizations and prescribed medications.

"I'm from Brownsville, Texas, so I felt at home," said SPC Laura Flores. "While I was growing up, I saw many people in need. I'm glad the Army has given me the opportunity to give back to my community."

"The folks here really appreciate the services provided during this mission and they gained a lot of respect for the military," Michels said.

For the Texas Soldiers, Operation Lone Star was another opportunity to provide quality medical service while honing their skills.

— SPC Derek Del Rosario, 100th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment



SPC Ryan Smith

OREGON RESERVISTS PATROL BAGHDAD'S WATERS

Baghdad, Iraq

WHILE foot patrols in Iraq are the most common way to gain information and ensure the safety of the troops, water patrols are just as important.

Every day the Soldiers of the 671st Engineer Co., an Oregon-based Reserve unit, travel the murky waters of the Tigris River ensuring things are

running smoothly.

"We're out on the river making our presence known," said SGT Timothy Dorris.

Though the Soldiers' main mission is building bridges, they also gather information from people along the river.

"We've caught smugglers and found explosives along the river banks," he said.

He said they also serve as guards and escorts for psychological-operations Soldiers who use the river to disseminate information to the Iraqi people.

"The Iraqis know we're here to help," he said. "I know they appreciate it by all the waves we get during our water patrols."

— SPC Ryan Smith,
372nd MPAD